

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 241331

21

ORIGIN ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 NSCE-00

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY PANAMA IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 241331

E.O. 11652:GDS

TAGS:PFOR, PN, UN

SUBJECT:BOYD'S APPOINTMENT WITH SCRANTON, SEPTEMBER 29

AT 4:30 PM

1. BOYD'S MEETING WITH AMBASSADOR SCRANTON WILL GIVE US AN OPPORTUNITY TO FEEL OUT PANAMANIAN TACTICS OVER THE SHORT TERM. FROM CONVERSATIONS WHICH AMBASSADOR JORDEN HAS HAD IN PANAMA AND FROM OUR PRIOR EXPERIENCE IN DEALING WITH THE GOP, IT IS LIKELY THAT PANAMA BELIEVES IT CAN USE PRESSURE TACTICS TO FORCE THE U.S. TO THE NEGOTIATING TABLE. ONE POSSIBLE PANAMANIAN SCENARIO WOULD BE A SHARPLY WORDED BOYD ATTACK ON THE U.S. DURING UNGA GENERAL DEBATE REMARKS (BOYD IS CURRENTLY INSCRIBED FOR OCTOBER 4) WITH THE INTENTION OF GETTING SUFFICIENT PUBLIC ATTENTION IN THE UNITED STATES TO MAKE PANAMA A SUBJECT FOR DISCUSSION DURING THE PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN FOREIGN POLICY

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PAGE 02 STATE 241331

DEBATE OCTOBER 6. BOYD WOULD THEN USE BILATERAL OCTOBER 7

IN A FURTHER EFFORT TO FORCE U.S. TO AGREE TO IMMEDIATE
TALKS AT THE CHIEF NEGOTIATOR LEVEL.

2. WHILE THIS SCENARIO MAKES LITTLE SENSE FROM OUR VIEW-
POINT, IT IS THE TYPE OF PANAMANIAN MISPERCEPTION OF OUR

INTENTIONS AND OF OUR POLITICAL SITUATION WHICH HAS TOO
OFTEN CHARACTERIZED THE CURRENT ROUND OF NEGOTIATIONS.
WHILE WE CANNOT HOPE TO EDUCATE THE GOP ON ALL THE FINE
POINTS OF U.S. POLITICAL LIFE, WE CAN MAKE AN ATTEMPT TO
HELP BOYD (WHO IS PROBABLY ACTING ON INSTRUCTIONS FROM
TORRIJOS) TO AVOID THE CONSEQUENCES OF THIS PANAMANIAN
FOLLY. IT MAY BE THAT HE HAS REQUESTED THE APPOINTMENT
IN ORDER TO GAIN INSIGHT INTO THE NEGOTI-
ATING SITUATION AND THE STATUS OF THE ELECTION CAMPAIGN.
HE MAY ALSO WANT TO DISCUSS GENERAL U.S. PLANS AT THE
UNGA AND POSSIBLE PANAMANIAN TACTICS WITH RESPECT TO THE
INTRODUCTION OF A RESOLUTION ON THE NEGOTIATIONS.

3. WE THEREFORE SEE THE SEPTEMBER 29 MEETING AS AN OP-
PORTUNITY TO SOFTEN ANY PLANNED PANAMANIAN HISTRIONICS ON
OCTOBER 4 AND TO PREPARE THE GROUND FOR BOYD'S BILATERAL
WITH THE SECRETARY OCTOBER 7. FOLLOWING SUGGESTED TALK-
ING POINTS ARE PROVIDED FOR THE AMBASSADOR'S USE:

-- THE UNITED STATES IS DISTURBED BY THE SERIES
OF ATTACKS ON THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT BY THE GOVERN-
MENT OF PANAMA DURING THE PAST FEW WEEKS. THE CHARGES
WERE NOT ONLY GROUNDLESS BUT ALSO TEND TO COMPLICATE U.S.-
PANAMANIAN RELATIONS AND CREATED AN ATMOSPHERE WHICH IS
NOT HELPFUL TO THE NEGOTIATIONS.

-- WE WERE PARTICULARLY CONCERNED BY YOUR OWN REMARKS
QUOTED IN POST INTERVIEW WHICH IF ACCURATELY CITED
AMOUNT TO A PERSONAL ATTACK BY YOU ON THE PRESIDENT.

-- THE STATEMENTS WHICH YOU AND YOUR GOVERNMENT HAVE
MADE ARE SELF-DEFEATING.

-- REPETITION OF THESE FALSE ALLEGATIONS AT THE UNGA
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PAGE 03 STATE 241331

WOULD DO CONSIDERABLE DAMAGE TO THE NEGOTIATIONS.

-- WE DO NOT WANT TO SEE THE NEGOTIATIONS DRAGGED INTO
THE ELECTION PROCESS IN THE UNITED STATES. BOTH PARTIES'
CANDIDATES HAVE TAKEN HELPFUL AND CLEAR STANDS ON THE
NEGOTIATIONS. WE WOULD LIKE TO LEAVE THE MATTER THERE.
BUT YOU SHOULD REALIZE THAT WE HAVE OUR OWN DOMESTIC
AUDIENCES TOO. FOR NOW, WE BELIEVE THAT THE IMPORTANT

THING IS FOR BOTH SIDES TO AVOID MAKING STATEMENTS WHICH WILL SERVE TO COMPLICATE THE NEGOTIATIONS RATHER THAN LEAD TO A SOLUTION OF THE MANY OUTSTANDING ISSUES.

-- (ONLY IF RAISED BY BOYD) WE DO NOT BELIEVE THAT A DEBATE ON THE CANAL ISSUE AT THE UNGA OR IN THE SECURITY COUNCIL WOULD BE HELPFUL TO THE NEGOTIATIONS. INDEED, THE STATEMENTS OF SUPPORT WHICH PANAMA COULD EXPECT TO GET IN EITHER FORUM WOULD BE USED BY TREATY OPPONENTS IN THE U.S. AS REASONS WHY THE UNITED STATES SHOULD NOT NEGOTIATE A NEW TREATY IN PANAMA.

4. FYI IN AN INTERVIEW WITH THE WASHINGTON POST SEPTEMBER 22, BOYD WAS QUOTED AS SAYING 'IT WOULDN'T SURPRISE ME IF FORD MIGHT BE LOOKING FOR A MAYAGUEZ INCIDENT TO ALLOW HIM TO EXHIBIT HIS MACHISMO -- THAT MIGHT PERMIT HIM TO CAPTURE THE SUPPORT HE WILL NEED TO BE RE-ELECTED.' "THE ZONIANS WOULD BE VERY CONTENT IF PANAMA COULD BECOME THE GUINEA PIG FOR FORD TO SHOW HE IS MACHO." A PANAMANIAN DIPLOMATIC NOTE TO OUR EMBASSY SEPTEMBER 17 MAINTAINED THAT UNITED STATES ARMED FORCES IN THE CANAL ZONE HAD INTERVENED IN PANAMANIAN AFFAIRS AND HAD EFFECTED A DESTABILIZATION PLAN. MESSAGES RELATING TO THESE EVENTS HAVE BEEN REPEATED TO USUN OVER THE PAST TWO WEEKS. ROBINSON

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